United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in resolution adopted last night, condemns Bosnian Serb attacks on Gorazde; demands immediate cease-fire throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, under UNPROFOR auspices.

+ Security Council, in another resolution yesterday, adjusts UNAMIR mandate with view to mediating cease-fire and aiding humanitarian work in Rwanda; reduces Mission's strength to some 270 personnel.

+ NATO Council authorizes use of air strikes against military targets around Gorazde if Bosnian Serbs do not end attacks against safe area, pull forces back, and allow UNPROFOR freedom of movement.

+ Bosnian Serb civilians prevent United Nations convoy from reaching Gorazde; Special Rapporteur for former Yugoslavia says special anti-personnel rocket is being used in attacks on city.

+ United Nations launches appeal for $289 million to provide humanitarian aid in Iraq until next March.

+ UNICEF Executive Board to hold regular and annual sessions concurrently at Headquarters beginning Monday.

+ IAEA hosts meeting on safety situation at Chernobyl; experts say plant should be shut down as soon as possible, but Ukraine says it is dependent on nuclear energy.

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The Security Council last night demanded the immediate conclusion of a cease-fire agreement in Gorazde and throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the auspices of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). In unanimously adopting resolution 913 (1994), the Council condemned attacks by the Bosnian Serbs against Gorazde and demanded that they withdraw to where they would no longer threaten the safe area. It also demanded an end to provocative action around the safe areas, the release of all United Nations personnel held by the Bosnian Serbs and freedom of movement for UNPROFOR.

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The Council invited the Secretary-General to ensure that UNPROFOR was able to monitor the situation in Gorazde and any cease-fire and disengagement of military forces, including measures to put heavy weapons under United Nations control. Underlying the urgent need to intensify efforts towards an overall political settlement, it called for close consultation between the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the European Union to bring together diplomatic initiatives.

The Bosnian representative told the Council that those who had designated Gorazde as a safe area could not avoid responsibility for the lives of its residents. The Council ould not continue to impede his country's right to self-defence unless it accepted that responsibility. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) said peace in "the former Bosnia and Herzegovina" was elusive because the international community had acted on false premises. A civil war provoked by forceful secession had been treated as an aggression by one nation against another.

The United States called for Bosnia and Herzegovina to be exempted from the arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia. While condemning attacks against Gorazde, the Russian Federation warned that air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs could escalate the conflict.

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In another meeting last night, the Security Council adjusted the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) so that it would act as an intermediary between the parties there in an attempt to secure a cease-fire. The Mission will also assist in the resumption of humanitarian relief in Rwanda and monitor and report on developments there. By unanimously adopting resolution 912 (1994), the Council authorized a Mission strength of some 270 personnel.

The Council demanded an immediate end to the fighting between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and the mindless carnage engulfing the country. It expressed regret at the incident in which the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi lost their lives and at the violence which had claimed the lives of the Prime Minister, government officials and thousands of other civilians.

The Council said that it would keep the situation in Rwanda under constant review and that it was ready to promptly consider any recommendations the Secretary-General might make on UNAMIR's strength and mandate. It reiterated the need for full implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement, which was the only viable framework for resolving the conflict and the basis for peace, national unity and reconciliation.

A United Nations spokesman today said that some 1,000 UNAMIR troops would leave Rwanda today and tomorrow, leaving 600 there by Monday. Meanwhile, Special Representative Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh was continuing his efforts to bring an end to the violence.

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Council today authorized the use of air strikes against Bosnian Serb military targets around Gorazde if the Bosnian Serbs did not end their attacks against the safe area immediately, pull their forces back three kilometres from the city centre, and allow United Nations forces and humanitarian relief convoys freedom of movement there. The air strikes will be permitted within a 20-kilometre radius of Gorazde, but within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with procedural arrangements already worked out beteen NATO and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

NATO reaffirmed it's readiness to provide close air support should the Bosnian Serbs attack UNPROFOR or other United Nations personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or forcibly interfere with the implementation of their mandate. It also called on the Bosnian Government not to undertake offensive action from within Gorazde.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali later expressed support for the North Atlantic Council's decisions and said the United Nations and NATO were coordinating closely in that regard.

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Bosnian Serb women and children yesterday prevented a United Nations convoy carrying humanitarian supplies from reaching the besieged Bosnian town of Gorazde, according to a spokesman for the Organization. As a result, United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Commander Lieutenant-General Michael Rose ordered the convy to return to Sarajevo.

Bosnian Serb forces today continued to shell Gorazde, killing 99 people in 24 hours. The Special Rapporteur for the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, appealed to them to end their attacks against the city and to allow humanitarian organizations to conduct their work there. He noted that Gorazde's hospital was being deliberately targeted, and said that a special type of anti-personnel rocket had caused many casualties. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serbs released a Dutch military observer who had been detained since last week.

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The United Nations today launched an inter-agency appeal for $289 million to provide humanitarian aid to Iraq between now and March. The aid programme will support rehabilitation activities which encourage self-reliance and reduce dependency on external food assistance. It will also seek to raise agricultural productivity and the resettlement of displaced people in their own villages. The programme will also provide water and electricity supplies and health services.

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United Nations guards will be needed to provide security for personnel distributing aid in the northern Governorates of Suleimaniyah, Arbil and Dohuk, according to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

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Increased involvement in Central and Eastern Europe will be one of the topics taken up when the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) holds its regular and annual sessions at Headquarters over the next two weeks. Beginning Monday, the Board will consider broad policy questions and examine proposals for activities in more than 60 countries, with a special focus on Africa. In his report to the Board, UNICEF Executive Director, James P. Grant noted that UNICEF was involved in more than 130 countries last year, with programme costs totaling $804 million.

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Experts from 12 countries and Ukrainian representatives today concluded a review of the safety situation at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which hosted the two-day meeting in Vienna. An IAEA expert mission last month found serious safety deficiencies at the station and informed the President of the Ukraine that international levels of safety were not being met there.

The Ukrainian representatives told the meeting that their country needed nuclear power because its economy was in poor condition and gas and oil imports were expensive and potentially unreliable. They said the safety level at Chernobyl could be upgraded if the international community provided financial assistance. However, a majority of participants at the meeting wished to see operations at the station discontinued as soon as possible.

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